Space Vehicle

2789. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has under consideration the proposal to manufacture twin engine medium range combat aircraft and a cost effective space vehicle; and

(b) if so, by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Modernisation of Vizag Airport

2790. DR. T. SUBBRAMI REDDY:
SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Minister while laying the foundation stone for the 191.52 crores modernisation-cum-expansion project at Vizag airport has pointed out that Vizag would become a gateway of India;

(b) if so, whether the work on this project has been started;

(c) if so, by what time the project is likely to be completed;

(d) whether the Defence Ministry has contributed Rs. 141.52 crores for this project; and

(e) at what stage is the work at present?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The project is likely to be completed by 2006.

(d) The Defence Ministry has agreed to contribute Rs. 141.52 crores for the project.

(e) the State Government has already handed over 240.06 acres of land for runway expansion. Action for inviting tenders has been initiated by AAI being nodal agency for execution of the project.

Purchase of Scorpene Submarines

†2791. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to purchase six scorpene submarines from a French company namely D.C.N., C.S.F. Thomson company;

(b) whether Government are aware that this company has been supplying submarines to Pakistan since long and has registered a very bad record besides being involved in kickbacks; and

(c) if answers to part (a) and (b) above are in affirmative, the reaction of Government thereto alongwith details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. Government proposes to construct French designed Scorpene Submarines at Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai and is negotiating with M/s.Armaris—a French company in this regard. There is no proposal to purchase the Submarines from France.

(b) It is known that the French company has collaborated with Pakistan for the supply of Submarines but there is no concrete knowledge of its record in dealing with Pakistan or being involved in kickbacks.

(c) The French collaborator has been chosen on the basis of the design of the Submarine and its ability and competence in supplying associated equipment. Adequate safeguards including standard clauses, having their aim at preventing corrupt practices, will be included in the contract when signed.

Area of Coastline under Indian Navy

2792. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.